

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Previously presented) A method of providing a file stored in a computer system with version-specific information relating to a virus scanning application that is independent from an application used to create the file, the method comprising:

receiving a request from the virus scanning application to create a version-specific attribute associated with the file, wherein the version-specific attribute contains version-specific information relating to the virus scanning application;

maintaining the version-specific attribute to reflect relevant updates to the file by automatically invalidating the version-specific information in response to a predetermined event, wherein the version-specific attribute comprises mask information providing information related to which predetermined events invalidate the version-specific information;

receiving a request from the virus scanning application to evaluate the version-specific attribute; and

providing the version specific information to the virus scanning application in response to the request to evaluate the version specific attribute.

2. (Previously presented) A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the version-specific information relates to a version of a virus definition file.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the predetermined event is an update to file data.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) A method of as defined in claim 1 wherein the method further comprises:

providing security information within the version-specific attribute.

8. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the invalidating act further comprises deleting the version-specific attribute.

9. (Original) A computer program product readable by a computer and encoding instructions for executing the method recited in claim 1.

10. (Previously presented) A method of accessing a file stored in a computer system, the file having an associated version-specific attribute provided by a virus scanning application that is independent from an application used to create the file, wherein the version-specific attribute comprises meta information relating to the virus scanning application and mask information providing information related to which predetermined events invalidate the version-specific attribute, said method comprising:

receiving an access attempt relating to an access request;

determining whether the access attempt relates to an invalidating access;

if the access attempt relates to an invalidating access:

invalidating the version-specific attribute; and

performing the access operation related to the access request; and

if the access attempt does not relate to an invalidating access then performing the access operation related to the access request.

11. (Previously presented) A method of accessing a file as defined in claim 10 wherein if the access attempt does not relate to an invalidating access, then said method further comprises:

determining whether the access depends on the version specific attribute;

if the access does not depend on the version specific attribute, then performing the access operation related to the access request; and

if the access depends on the version specific attribute:

determining whether the attribute is valid; and

performing a predetermined operation with the virus scanning application based on whether the attribute is determined to be valid.

12. (Original) A computer program product readable by a computer and encoding instructions for executing the method recited in claim 10.

13. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure, wherein the data structure comprises:

an actual file data section containing actual file data;

a header section; and

a version-specific attribute section, wherein the version-specific attribute section is created by a virus scanning application that is independent from an application used to create the actual file data, and wherein the version-specific attribute comprises a meta information section and a mask information section, the mask information section providing information related to which predetermined events invalidate the version-specific attribute, and wherein the version-specific attribute is invalidated in response to one of said predetermined events.

14. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium as defined in claim 13 wherein the meta information section stores the name of the attribute, and wherein the version-specific attribute further comprises:

a version information section for storing information related to the version of a virus definition file used with the virus scanning.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium as defined in claim 14 wherein the predetermined event relates to a modification of the data structure.

17. (Previously presented) A computer program product readable by a computer and encoding instructions for executing a computer process for managing version-specific information for a file within a file system, said computer process comprising:

storing version-specific information as an attribute to create a version-specific attribute for the file, wherein the version-specific attribute comprises meta information relating to a virus scanning application that is independent from an application used to create the file and mask information providing information related to which predetermined events invalidate the version-specific attribute; and

invalidating the version-specific attribute in response to a predetermined access attempt.

18. (Previously presented) A computer program product as defined in claim 17 wherein the computer comprises a file system and the acts of storing and invalidating are performed by the file system.

19. (Previously presented) A computer program product as defined in claim 17 wherein the version-specific information relates to a virus definition file used with the virus scanning application.

20. (Previously presented) A computer program product as defined in claim 19 wherein the predetermined access attempt relates to a modification of the file.

21. (Original) A computer program product as defined in claim 20 wherein the version-specific attribute remains following one of the following access attempts: copy, rename or backup.